



John Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

## OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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### Testimony of Town Manager John Salomone of Newington

- Raised Bill No. 303 – An Act Concerning a Municipal Hotel Tax
- Raised Bill No. 5255 – An Act Concerning Municipal Mandate Relief

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Committee on Planning and Development:

My name is John Salomone, and I am the Town Manager of Newington, CT. I know that much of your testimony today is probably repetitive and I will keep my comments brief. I do believe, however, it is incumbent on municipal governments to speak out on issues of concern when the State Legislature is debating policy changes. I feel it is important to give input to the important legislative committees on matters that will directly affect municipalities.

In reference to the Act Concerning Municipal Hotel Tax, I would urge the Committee to recommend a favorable vote on this matter. This additional revenue option (and I underscore the word option) will allow municipalities to make a decision whether they wish to diversify their revenue stream. The Town of Newington utilizes the property tax for almost 78% of its budget and any diversification of this revenue stream is a fiscally sound goal. Conservatively, if the Town of Newington was to implement a 4% occupancy tax on hotels, it would increase our revenue between \$250,000 and \$300,000 per year. This is a significant sum and a step in the right direction of revenue diversification.

The second item I stand ready to recommend to the Committee is the Act Concerning Municipal Mandate Relief. I have been a Town Manager and in government for over 30 years, and my first exposure to the State law on evictions occurred in Watertown in 1978. Frankly, I was surprised that the towns had that responsibility, and there were many times that we didn't receive notice until the morning of the eviction. Needless to say it was a traumatic experience for the evictee, the State Marshals and Town staff. Therefore, I look at this as not so much a mandate relief as a more efficient and humane way to relocate personal possessions upon eviction. It makes no sense to have a State Marshal move the possessions and drop them off at the curb. It is much more efficient for the Marshal to move the possessions into a van and have them stored in one place so that the possessions do not get lost in the exchange. There would be, in the Town of Newington's case, a savings of about \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the number of evictions that occur each year, and the number is unfortunately increasing as the economy becomes more challenging. In summary, I believe that having one point of control for eviction makes sense for the State Marshall, for the towns and for the individuals that are evicted. I urge the Committee to positively recommend its passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these bills, and I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.